

Sarah LaRose, M.A. Agricultural Education Instructor, Nonnewaug High School, Woodbury, CT.

Sarah LaRose has taught agricultural education for grades 9-12 for the past 7 years at Nonnewaug High School's Ellis Clark Regional Agriscience and Technology Program in Woodbury, Connecticut. LaRose holds a Bachelor's of Science in Animal Science (2007), and a Master's of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction (2008), both from the University of Connecticut. Despite arriving to main campus as a sophomore as a "branchfer" student from Avery Point, LaRose became extremely involved with on-campus activities in the College of Ag. While at UConn, she was an active member in Block and Bridle Club, and Dairy Club, and also served as a State FFA Officer. She also participated in the Little International Livestock Show, Dairy Show, Horse Practicum, Dairy Judging, Alpha Zeta, and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Undergraduate Student Council.

She has taught a variety of coursework including Introductory Safe Tractor Operation, Ag Mechanics, Animal Science, Plant Science, and FFA, as well as upper level courses in Veterinary Science, Horse Management, Livestock Production, Ag Business, and most recently, Local Food Production. She developed the curriculum for the Local Food Production class in response to the increasing presence of diversified small-scale farms catering to the local food movement in the community surrounding Nonnewaug. LaRose began the program in 2012, beginning with grant funding secured from a National FFA Food For All Grant, to start a school garden in which produce is donated to local food banks. To date, her students have donated approximately 3,600 pounds of produce. Now the program includes a 45'x200' fenced in school garden and a 20'x80' hydroponic greenhouse that LaRose and her students manage. In 2013 she was awarded the "Outstanding Young Agriculture Professional Award" by the Connecticut State Grange. In 2014 she was selected to receive the Region VI Outstanding Young Member Award of the National Association of Agricultural Educators, one of only 6 recipients nationwide.

Despite an intense interest in "local", LaRose has a deep-abiding love of travel that developed during her childhood in a military family, and has moved several times and traveled all over the world, before her family settled in Ledyard, Connecticut, where she graduated from Ledyard High School's Agriscience Program and was a member of the Ledyard Regional FFA Chapter. Most recently, her travels took her to South Korea in the summer of 2014, where she spent a month studying agricultural education in South Korea alongside other agriculture teachers, current Ag Education majors, professors from Penn State University and the University of Florida. Additionally, LaRose has an intense passion for sharing the benefits of student involvement in the National FFA Organization, and served as the Woodbury FFA Chapter Advisor this past year. Her passion for agricultural education is now taking her to the University of Florida, where she has been awarded a full fellowship in their Ph.D. program in Agricultural Education and Communication beginning in August 2015. She hopes to become a faculty member preparing the next generation of agricultural educators upon completion of her degree in 2018.